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SEPTEMBER 8, 2023 | VOLUME 14 | ISSUE 19

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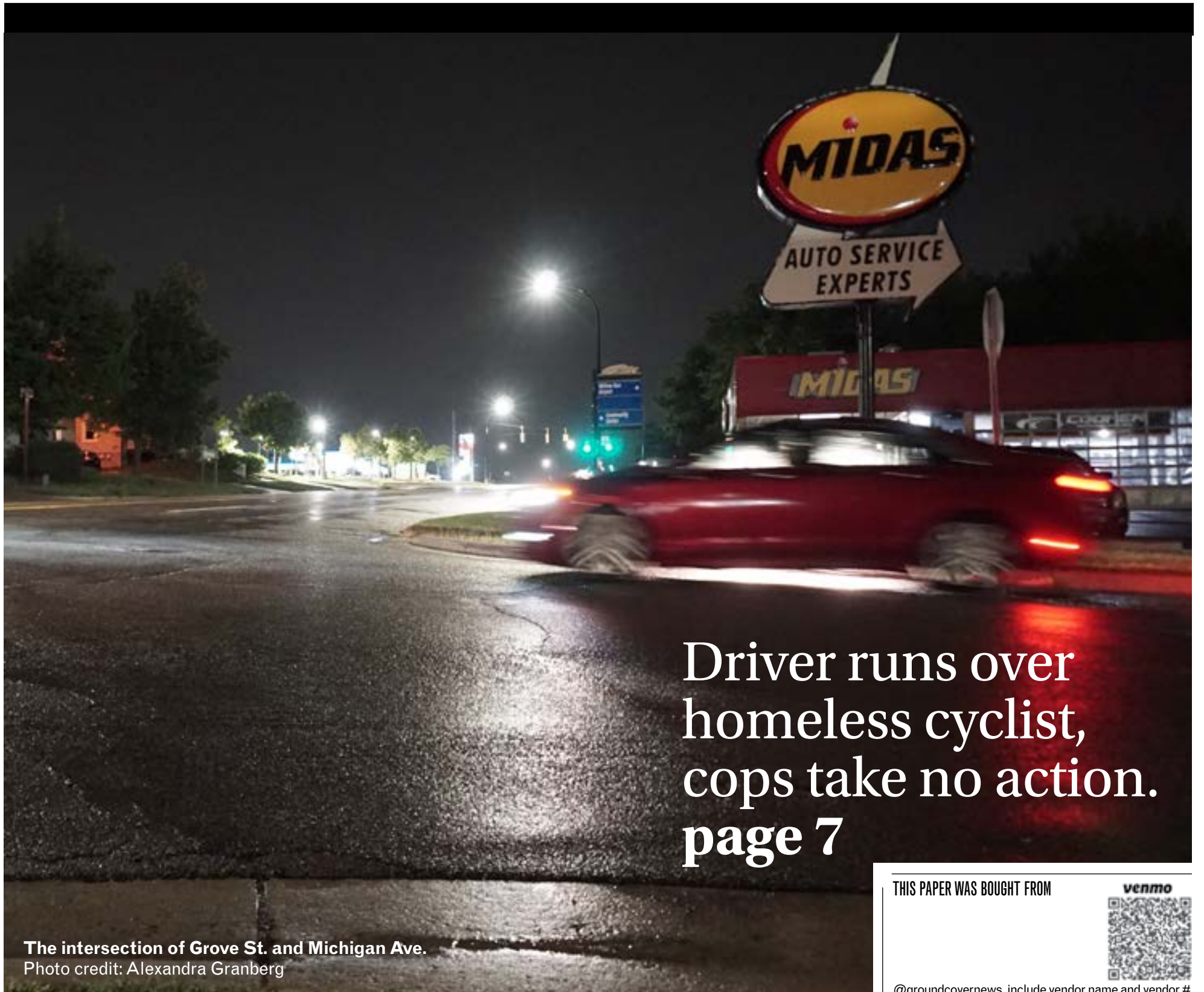
Undercover art intel: Ann Arbor's art scene is wild! **Page 3**



MEET YOUR
VENDOR:
TERRI DEMAR
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GROUND COVER

NEWS AND SOLUTIONS FROM THE GROUND UP | WASHTENAW COUNTY, MICH.



Driver runs over
homeless cyclist,
cops take no action.
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The intersection of Grove St. and Michigan Ave.
Photo credit: Alexandra Granberg

THIS PAPER WAS BOUGHT FROM



@groundcovernews, include vendor name and vendor #

community **EVENTS**

PULL OVER PREVENTION REPAIR CLINIC

Saturday, September 9, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Masjid Ibrahim (315 S Ford Blvd, Ypsilanti)

GROUNDCOVER's NEW VOLUNTEER MEETING

Friday, September 15, 4 p.m. - 5 p.m.
Groundcover News office (423 S. 4th Avenue, Ann Arbor)

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE

Thursday, September 21, all day
Ann Arbor Community Commons (319 5th Street, Ann Arbor)

PEACE HOUSE's 5th BIRTHDAY PARTY

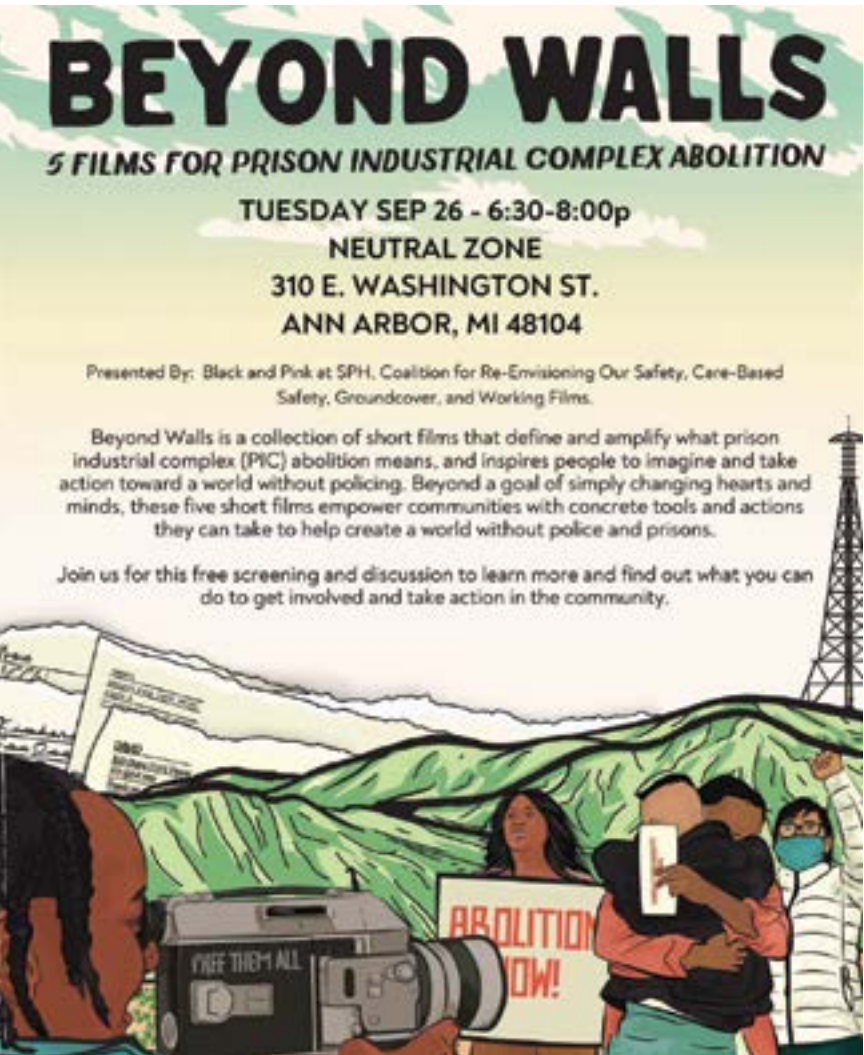
Saturday, September 23, 2 p.m. - 4 p.m.
Peace House Ypsi (706 Davis Street)

A SEAT AT THE TABLE: ARGUS FOOD TALKS

Monday, September 11, 6 p.m. (Packard Cafe) *Growing Hope*
Monday, September 18, 6 p.m. (Liberty Cafe) *FedUp Ministries*
Monday, September 25, 6 p.m. (Packard Cafe) *We the People Opportunity Farm*

BEYOND WALLS: 5 FILMS for PRISON INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX ABOLITION

Tuesday, September 26, 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.
Neutral Zone (310 E. Washington Street, Ann Arbor)
see adjacent graphic for more details



GROUNDCOVER NEWS

CREATING **OPPORTUNITY** AND A **VOICE** FOR LOW-INCOME PEOPLE WHILE TAKING ACTION TO END HOMELESSNESS AND POVERTY.

Groundcover News, a 501(c)(3) organization, was founded in April 2010 as a means to empower low-income persons to make the transitions from homeless to housed, and from jobless to employed.

Vendors purchase each copy of our regular editions of Groundcover News at our office for 50 cents. This money goes towards production costs. Vendors work selling the paper on the street for \$2, keeping all income and tips from each sale.

Street papers like Groundcover News exist in cities all over the United States, as well as in more than 40 other countries, in an effort to raise awareness of the plight of homeless people and combat the increase in poverty. Our paper is a proud member of the International Network of Street Papers.

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1/8	\$110.00	\$150.00	5 X 3 or 2.5 X 6.5	Three Months/Six Issues: 15% off
1/6	\$145.00	\$200.00	5 X 4	Six Months/Twelve Issues: 25% off
1/4	\$200.00	\$265.00	5 X 6.25	Full Year/Twenty-four Issues: 35% off
1/2	\$375.00	\$500.00	5 X 13 or 10.25 X 6.5	Only run for two weeks/one issue: 40% off
full page	\$650.00	\$900.00	10.25 X 13	Additional 20% discount for money saving coupons

MEET YOUR VENDOR



Terri Demar,
vendor No. 322

In one sentence, who are you?

A senior who grew up in Ann Arbor, went to Pioneer, kinda retired, but needs a little extra income.

Where do you usually sell Groundcover News? Wherever I feel there is an opportunity.

Why did you start selling Groundcover? I have health problems that stand in the way of a traditional job.

What is your superpower?

I have a great sixth sense about things; I'm intuitive and can read people usually.

If you could only eat one meal for the rest of your life, what would it be? Smoothies.

What do you wish you knew more about? Science, quantum physics, anti-gravity, dark matter.

What is the first thing you'd do if you won the lottery? See the world, buy a remote island, stocks, bring back open areas for animal life, plant more trees.

What is your pet peeve? People that don't take the time to understand you. I do not fit a certain mold.

If you could do anything for day, what would it be? Spend time at the pool.

If you had a warning label, what would it say? Wait and listen before you make a judgment.

What's the best way to start the day? Taking an hour for yourself outdoors, take a walk, have a cup of coffee.

What change would you like to see in Washtenaw County? I wish it was like it was in the 60s and 70s, when John Sinclair freed cannabis. More freedom and less judgment.

Undercover art intel: Ann Arbor's art scene is wild!

I took a small walk around the downtown area and observed several events. The events truly show just how popping downtown is and why everyone needs to take advantage of what is left of summer.

Walking past Ten Thousand Villages on Main Street I saw a large crowd of people gathered as if they were listening to slam poetry. The art expedition "Being Black in Ann Arbor (America)" by the artist Asha Jordan was being featured at CultureVerse gallery.

I was drawn in by the amazing African dancer Imani Ma'at. She flowed across the floor to the rhythm of the music. Her beaded skirt matched the movements of her hips and fast turns.

The formerly imprisoned Chairman of the Black Panthers, Baba Blair Anderson, exploded words of power and strength. I felt so



CINDY GERE
Groundcover vendor No. 279

honored to have heard raw truths cutting like a knife through the soul. This made me feel that Ann Arbor is truly back from the grip of the COVID-19 pandemic.

I doubled back and heard party songs and saw more dancing in the wild. It was Queer Bingo Time at the Avalon Bakery. I stood outside dancing to the fun club songs.

This time the dancer wore a wild silver club dress and did high

kicks and belly dancer moves. When the music ended I was invited inside to join in the fun bingo time. Believe it or not, I won a bag of yum yum cookies!

Both events were about American culture and just how wonderfully inclusive we truly are. If you choose to live in segregation, you become an 1880 horse with blinders on. We must take responsibility for how we act, no matter how we feel about the past. I choose to accept all people in a good way because that is who I am: Kaske Dene Wolf Clan Warrior.

In nature tradition no one is left out, regardless of their choices. Peace must be honored.

Join me for a wild night out in Ann Arbor with JaDEIn black of Boylesque drag troupe at Avalon Bakery, September 15 at 7 p.m.

I love soup!



DENISE SHEARER
Groundcover vendor No. 485

Soups are a good, calming and fancy meal to share. Giving someone soup is a way to show them you love and care about them. Soup is very healthy and nutritious, too. Soup is very easy to cook and a convenient meal.

Soup is a good meal for celebrations and get-togethers. Soup is also a good holiday meal, especially for Christmas and Thanksgiving. I like to go to meals at churches and the food banks when they have my favorite chicken noodle soup or beef stew. Vegetable stew is also good.

There are a lot of things that you can make soup out of, like meat and pasta or meat and vegetables, maybe some fruit mixed in, too. Spicy potato soup is also good. Collard greens, pepper and hot dog soup is also good.

There are a lot of good soups to make and it's also a comfort food. It's good to eat broth from vegetables or meats when you can't have solid foods that you have to chew. It digests and gets in your system very easily.

Growing up as a kid I loved chicken noodle soup

ART ON A JOURNEY

When homeless artists create and sell their art they gain much needed financial support while making sense of the world and finding meaning and purpose in it — it's a journey we're all on.

August 1 – September 14
at the Ann Arbor District Library, downtown branch.



All artwork is for sale (cash only).
Artists donate 10% of what they sell to Journey of Faith's homeless ministry.

a lot, and I still love it as an adult. I love chicken broth, too.

I hope some of these soup ideas are helpful to others. I hope to enjoy some soup during the cold fall and winter months with my friends.

Driver runs over homeless cyclist, cops take no action

ALEXANDRA GRANBERG
Groundcover contributor

August 9, at around 9 a.m., a car driver ran over and severely injured Gordie on the intersection of Michigan Avenue and South Grove Street in Ypsilanti. Gordie was on his bike, crossing Michigan Ave on the sidewalk. The driver was turning out of South Grove onto Michigan Ave.

Jill, Gordie's wife, who was right behind him, bent down under the car to find Gordie with one of the front tires pushed against his chest. She stood up and yelled at the driver to back up. The driver slowly backed away from Gordie, and got out of the car to see the damage. Without asking if the man he had just run over was okay, the driver then called an ambulance.

Gordie got up and started walking around in circles, delirious from the pain and breathing weirdly, according to Jill and Mikey, a friend and witness I spoke to for this article. Soon after, one of his lungs collapsed. Still he was able to walk himself to the ambulance once it arrived.

Police were the first to respond. They only took Gordie's first name, then spoke to Jill. When the cops asked Jill for an address she told them they had none — she and Gordie are currently homeless and staying in a tent. Upon hearing this, the cops stopped taking notes. They handed Jill a business card and a case number without further questions for her or Gordie.

Gordie does not know who the driver was, nor did he get the names of the cops. No pictures were taken at the scene. The ambulance driver told Jill she was not allowed to ride in the ambulance with her husband according to protocol.

Hit and walk?

When he hit Gordie, the driver was past the stop sign and on his phone, according to Mikey. Both Gordie and Mikey say they saw the cops talking to the driver before letting him go without so much as a ticket.

Before leaving the scene, the cops informed Gordie that he had been in the wrong for biking against traffic on

the sidewalk, and told him to get a lawyer.

According to Michigan traffic law, cyclists can ride on sidewalks unless restricted by a local ordinance. And when using the sidewalk legally a cyclist has all the same rights as a pedestrian.

Under an applicable Ypsilanti ordinance, sidewalk cycling is allowed in all city parts except "in any business district of the city." Which areas are included in the "business district" is not defined in the text. Nor is it made clear after a surprising amount of research, including digging through city documents with the help of a former city planner.

Steve Wilcoxon, Mayor Pro Tem and Council liaison to the Ypsilanti Non-Motorized Advisory Committee, seems just as confused by the wording. He tells me the term is not a zoning classification. However the area which makes up "the center" of Ypsilanti ends a block before Grove Street on Michigan Ave.

Wilcoxon also said "police officers are fairly ignorant about bicycle laws," and that "many people ride on the sidewalk

there." There is no bike lane on that stretch of Michigan Ave.

Broken, breathing

Gordie walked away with a broken collarbone, a number of fractures on his ribs and a punctured lung. He spent a week in the hospital. When I talked to him on the phone he sounded tired but under the circumstances upbeat: "I'm still breathing."

It was the first time he told the story to anyone beside his peers. Two weeks after the incident no authority had yet contacted Gordie or Jill. No law enforcement representative has asked for Gordie's statement.

Despite the physical and psychological trauma — the 43-year-old now has trouble sleeping and freezes at the sight of a car — Gordie said it could be worse: "It could have been a kid biking down that road."

Still, he said, "I feel this would be handled differently had it been someone of higher standing than myself."

Groundcover News will follow the development of this case.

Delonis is deteriorating

D.A.
Groundcover contributor

I'm writing this article believing that we are more than what is becoming of human services organizations.

The principles of a thriving, productive transitional facility is to promote health, well-being and tend to individual goals for clients whose only commonality is the lack of sustainable housing. Those are people who are at risk of harm, scrutiny and dejection of the human spirit. I can believe that the clients may have similarities, yet bear varied needs.

By grouping individuals as a whole, they are turning a blind eye to the fact that people may be beaten by self harm — whether it is intentional or not. They should not need to continue to experience hopelessness at a homeless persons' shelter.

After not being able to utilize the services of a particular homeless persons' shelter, I am untrusting about any shelter now. I have no trust in what the Robert J. Delonis Center is now. I guess some call it a refuge. As a woman enduring a brain injury, I have been verbally assaulted by men on the premises of the "shelter." As a result of speaking up about my rights being

openly violated, staff have blocked access to their facilities and protection. They've witnessed me being physically assaulted in front of the "shelter" in the middle of the night. Four staff members came down to the entrance door to the "shelter" and instructed me to leave the property. Not one of them asked if I was alright.

Once again, promoting safety was not their priority. The employees should always keep in mind their positions as people who are employed as human services workers that have an ethic. They have an oath to uphold — that they will promote safety, humanity, and fairness — wherever they may be at the time of your encounter with them, all human beings on the property of the "shelter."

Until recently, I had never slept in front of the shelter or on the street. It is the most dangerous, vulnerable place for a person of any gender to sleep.

A so-called "female" staff member made me sleep outside in March in freezing weather because I have a brain injury and use a walker. She wrongfully demanded that I leave the women's (4th) floor at 7:30 a.m., whereas it is the rule and standard that everyone is expected to leave the 4th floor at 8 a.m.

At 7:30 a.m, I gathered what I could, went to the first (main) floor to wash and dress. As I was washing myself, the male on duty, the first floor receptionist, kept busting into the bathroom without knocking or using any verbal alerts. As I stood half-naked trying to take care of my hygiene, he demanded that I hurry up and get out. No one can wash themselves, fully dress, and brush their teeth in ten minutes. Especially an individual who has a brain injury who requires an aide.

I am going to level down. Because there are genuine, devoted staff members who exhibit a neutral character. Yet, some will not speak up about the fraternizing that goes on between some of the staff and clients. There is no modesty in some of the apparel that most of the female staff comes to work dressed in. I would realize as a human services employee that wearing coochie-cutter shorts to work is a distraction to some people and not professional attire. Whether it is a male or female, I believe that it would come to mind that you are not at home. You are at the "shelter" to reveal available community resources, not your personal goods.

People need enlightenment, hope — not another false rollercoaster ride.

When people know they have choices and the ability to overcome their issues, that is the most wonderful gift you can offer anyone.

Landlords' unreasonable requirements are a way to reject people that are low income. It is ridiculous and reckless to only rent to individuals whose income is higher than \$6,000 a month. It is a form of concealing that they are discriminating against you for being poor. It is a method of accelerating gentrification and prolonging time spent in shelters or on the street.

Why not care for others with righteous works? As you are lifting one up, you may also be lifting yourself up.

Let your work be a true reflection of what you are supposed to do. It takes all of us to make things go right.

Offer people literacy programs, mental health services, job-skills training and show people how to effectively fill out a job application and learn creative resume-writing skills. Make sure clients are being proactive in searching for housing prospects.

When we ensure individual clients that they are empowered and they can believe in themselves, this is a start to building community and independence!



TECH QUESTIONS + ANSWERS FROM WASHTENAW LITERACY

Q: I change phone numbers a lot. Is there any way to transfer contacts, share my number, or reset associations with my old number when it happens?

A: Changing phones or phone plans can be a huge hassle, especially when it means losing all your contacts and having to update everyone in your life about your new number. In addition to your contacts, switching phones can also involve losing apps, photos, videos and music that were stored on your old device. There are some ways for you to smooth the transition between phones or phone plans. However, the usefulness of those solutions will vary depending on your specific circumstances and the type of phone you are using.

If you are choosing to get a new phone or phone plan, the easiest way to transfer all your old information to your new device is to ask your service provider to do it for you. Many phone service providers are willing to do this for free when you purchase a new phone from them or switch to their plan. Usually, all you need to do is bring your old device with you when you go to the store to purchase your new phone or phone plan. Sometimes, phone service providers can even help you keep your old phone number when you switch to a new phone or phone plan.

Unfortunately, if you are switching numbers because your old phone is broken or lost, it is not always possible to recover your information. One way to avoid that situation is to use a cloud service to back up the data stored on your device. Doing so is often easier than it sounds, especially if you are an Android user with a Google (Gmail) account. Simply go to your phone's settings, select "Accounts and Backup," and tap on "Backup Data." That should open a menu where you will be able to store your phone's information, including contacts, on your Google Drive. When you set up a new Android phone you should be able to download all your old phone's

information.

Of course, if you are mostly worried about hanging onto your old contacts, you can always take the low-tech route and find a place to write down all the phone numbers that are stored on your phone. Keeping phone numbers and other contact information written down on paper can be a more reliable way to ensure that you'll still have them after changing phone numbers, although you'll need to regularly update your contact list and take the time to manually enter the contacts into your new device.

Q: I have a hard time reading and navigating my phone screen due to vision impairment. Are there settings or applications that could assist this?

A: Cell phones can be incredibly useful tools — giving you access to calling, texting, the internet and countless apps — all through a device small enough to fit in your pocket and be carried anywhere. But the portability that makes owning a cell phone so convenient can also cause problems. How are you supposed to take advantage of all those great features when you're struggling to make out what's being displayed on that tiny screen?

Difficulty reading and navigating computer screens is a common problem, especially for people using smaller devices like phones and tablets. Fortunately, cell phones, tablets, and computers are often equipped with settings options that can make them more accessible and easier to use. You can typically find these options in the settings menu under the label "Accessibility" or "Ease of Access." Although accessibility features can differ from device to device, there are some options that are available on most phones and tablets. That includes accessibility options that make your device's screen easier to read and use.

One accessibility feature that is almost universal is the ability to

change how your device displays text. Often, this setting will appear as a sliding scale, which allows you to choose the size of text on your screen. Changing text size will make phone menus, text messages, and call logs easier to see and navigate. On many devices it will also affect the size of text in certain applications, including web browsers and your email inbox. Some phones and tablets also have options which allow you to make all text bold, highlight buttons, or increase the contrast of your display. If you are having trouble seeing your phone's display, don't forget to check your brightness settings. Increasing your screen's brightness can improve its visibility.

Another useful feature for those with vision impairment is a screen reader. When turned on, screen readers will describe what's on your phone screen or read selected text out loud. On Apple devices this feature is called VoiceOver and on most Android devices it is called TalkBack. Learning how to effectively use a screen reader can take some time, but it is an excellent tool for those who cannot read their screens.

Android users should also know about the Android Accessibility Suite, a downloadable application available on the Google Play Store. If you have an Android with limited accessibility settings, downloading the Accessibility Suite can give you a greater number of options, including the TalkBack screen reader and voice commands.

The accessibility options described above only scratch the surface of what many phones and tablets have to offer. Additional accessibility features exist that can help users with a wide range of challenges, including hearing loss and hand tremors. As is often the case, features designed to help folks with disabilities can be helpful for everyone. Familiarizing yourself with the accessibility features on your device is a good idea, regardless of whether or not you can easily read your screen.

What's Happening at the Ann Arbor District Library

Open 10am–8pm Daily
Hang out in any of our five locations across town, browsing books, magazines, newspapers, and more, or check out movies, CDs, art prints, musical instruments, and home tools—you name it! Study and meeting rooms, fast and free WiFi, and plenty of places to sit and hang out.

Book Clubs To Go
Book Clubs To Go is a service available at each AADL location that provides the convenience of complete kits for book discussions. Inside, you'll find 10 copies of the featured book, one movie DVD, and a resource folder. Request a kit today through the online catalog or by calling (734) 327-4200

Washtenaw Library for the Blind & Print Disabled at AADL
This free service loans books, magazines, & videos in alternative formats (audiobooks, large print, braille books & magazines, and descriptive video) to individuals who are unable to read or use standard printed materials. Visit aadl.org/wlbpd/apply to apply.

FEATURED EVENT
AMAL
WALKS ACROSS AMERICA
Saturday, September 23 • 7pm
Ann Arbor Farmers Market in Kerrytown
Little Amal is the 12-foot-tall puppet of a 10-year-old Syrian refugee child who has become a global symbol of human rights. This fall, Amal will walk Ann Arbor. Meet at the Kerrytown Farmer's Market on Saturday, September 23, to walk with Little Amal to the Downtown Library.

Growing hopeless

Growing Hope is a food justice non-profit in Ypsilanti that manages a Farmers Marketplace Hall where they also host an incubator kitchen. It is located at 16 Black Lives Matter Blvd (S. Washington St). The kitchen provides a space for small start-up businesses to use a licensed kitchen for an hourly or monthly rent. Recently some people have sought shelter under the awning in the parking lot of the Marketplace Hall.

The people sleeping under the awning are homeless. The neighboring residents and business owners were disgusted by them, referring to their belongings as “litter,” and their presence as “an eyesore.” These words in quotes were actually used by a Ypsilanti city inspector who came with the threat of legal action. Initially, the inspector spoke with Bee Mayhew, the former manager of the Incubator Kitchen. Bee had shown up for work five minutes before the inspector arrived. The sudden arrival of the official caused a visceral reaction in Bee, who told him to speak to the Growing Hope board of directors.

Bee has borne the brunt of the neighborhood complaints since the people began to sleep outside the kitchen. Angry phone calls and visits and the



JIM CLARK
Groundcover vendor No. 139

frequent presence of the police were part of her daily encounters. Bee thought about taking matters into her own hands. She spoke of creating a positive, neighborly community vibe filled with people at picnic tables eating, making music and art, playing games, including other things for kids and young people to do. The goal for the parking lot would be to become a community hub where people are offered a supportive environment instead of being treated like trash.

The response from Growing Hope? Instead of compassion, the police were dispatched on August 23 around 7 p.m. to evict the people under the awning. The board of directors of Growing Hope made the call. It appears that a landlord who owns



Ypsilanti community members blocking the installation of a fence at the Growing Hope Marketplace Hall.

several buildings downtown threatened a lawsuit against Growing Hope for violating their 501(c)3 mission. As a result, the board voted to have the people removed. In other words, “take out the trash.” The police were sympathetic yet carried out the eviction. A large group of angry community members appeared at the awning to protest the eviction. They were told that Community Mental Health would put the people up for a night at a motel and that Growing Hope would pay for four more days. This remains to be seen.

Why won’t these landlords, business owners, and Growing Hope be good neighbors? Why won’t they do the

right thing and advocate for a supportive shelter in Ypsilanti? That shelter would serve as that community hub Bee and the people want. They need a place to sleep safely and to receive support from the professional community. It would be a place to get help with addiction and mental illness and a place to get help finding employment. Most importantly it would be a place to belong and feel like human beings rather than trash.

We can do better.

Editor’s Note: This is an ongoing story and Groundcover News will be updating it in future issues.

Tolietts before tickets: Anti-homeless law charges \$250 fine, jail time or community service

LINDSAY CALKA
Publisher

Who would have thought an alleyway in downtown Ann Arbor would be the most expensive bathroom in the city?

For many months, Roberto Isla Caballero, Groundcover vendor No. 347, has slept rough on the corner of Main and Washington Streets, a place some might recognize as his Groundcover News sales corner.

On June 28, around 8 p.m, Caballero was far from a bathroom and couldn’t wait. It’s a discomfort many have experienced before. But for Caballero, the wait to the next restroom was a matter of time not distance — and so he relieved himself in “public.”

He was caught and received a ticket. Now he is facing the decision of paying \$250, spending 90 days in jail, or working 40 hours of community service.

The lack of public restrooms in downtown Ann Arbor and its disparate impact on the homeless community

has always been a public health issue, but it was exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic. When the downtown library, Blake Transit Center and businesses closed bathrooms even to paying customers, individuals who had no shelter in which to “shelter in place,” also had no reliable bathroom to use.

The Office of Community Economic Development collaborated with the Parks and Recreation Department and installed a port-a-potty in Liberty Plaza for a couple weeks, then took it away after complaints of it inspiring dangerous activity. Homeless individuals and activists protested against this solution, and it was put back until COVID cases died down.

Nowadays, bathrooms are not necessarily unavailable, per se, but are only accessible at key parts of the city, and during waking hours. The only free public restrooms are located at Blake Transit Center, Ypsilanti Transit Center, the Ann Arbor District Library, the Delonis Center, and maybe on infrequent occasions, a coffee shop will let people

use their bathroom, which is oftentimes locked under code or key. And that is only when they are open.

In Caballero’s case, the only bathroom that was open to him was the Blake Transit Center. This human need to urinate was criminalized because of the inhumane public spaces we have. If it was a few hours later, he would have had no option.

The consequences of public urination have the possibility to be greatly misaligned to the scale of misconduct. Caballero got off “easy,” as he was not placed on the sex-offender list. Being on that list could bar him from accessing future jobs and housing, not to mention the social stigma.

But that is not to say the consequences were light.

Caballero’s bold response to the judge’s offer of 90 days of jail, paying a \$250 fine, or 40 hours of community service reveals the sometimes dystopian reality of the homeless experience.

“90 days in jail? That’s 90 days of



three meals a day, 90 days with a bed and sleep, maybe TV.”

And, I would add, 90 days of a 24/7 accessible restroom.

Author’s note: During a follow-up court date after the completion of the article, Caballero’s charge was rightfully dismissed by Judge Miriam Perry.

The rent is too damn high! Statewide action demands lift of rent control ban in Michigan

ZACHARIAH FARAH
Groundcover contributor

On September 5, a crowd of several hundred renters from across the state of Michigan gathered on the steps of the Michigan State Capitol building in Lansing to make a simple proclamation: The Rent is Too Damn High!

The crowd, carrying flowing red banners, buzzed with excitement and energy. This was the first rally in many years demanding better conditions for renters in many years and there was a real sense that change could be won.

The four demands presented by the aptly named Rent is Too Damn High Coalition are simple and cogent:

1. Repeat the statewide ban on rent control so cities can implement rent stabilization measures.
2. Pass a renters bill of rights to greatly expand the legal protections shielding tenants from abusive landlords.
3. Invest \$4 billion in social housing that is permanently affordable and publicly owned.
4. Allocate \$1 billion to “housing first” programs designed to provide housing to people experiencing homelessness.

The event began with emotional speeches delivered by tenants who had been mistreated by their landlords, struggled to make rent and faced eviction from their homes. Local renter

and Huron Valley Democratic Socialists of America member, Justin Yuan, represented the McKinley Tenant Association which has been working to improve conditions at McKinley properties, one of the largest landlords in Washtenaw County. “Just as we fight the boss at work, we must fight the landlord at home!” declared Yuan, whose comments were met with loud applause.

Despite the intense 90° heat, the vibrance of the crowd continued throughout the speeches. After the tenant testimonials, we split into two groups, each directed towards a different chamber of the legislature: the House or the Senate. Chambers are located in opposite wings of the capitol. To our disappointment, the legislators had unexpectedly given themselves an extra day of vacation and weren’t present on the chamber floors. We filed into the horse-shoe-shaped galleries overlooking the debate floor and the many rows of empty legislators’ desks.

Call and response chants boomed throughout the rooms and hallways. “The roof, the roof, the roof is falling in! We’re fighting for good housing and you bet we’re gonna win!”

I was overwhelmed with the feeling that this previously silent room had been transformed into a living people’s house. We read our demands once again to our invisible legislators.



A highly charged group of demonstrators chanted and aired their demands in the Senate chambers. Another group visited the House.

“It looks like our legislators are hiding!” said one speaker, in reference to the absence of the representatives.

That wasn’t true of all of our legislators, however. Sen. Carrie Rheingans, Rep. Emily Dievendorf, Rep. Jimmie Wilson Jr. and Rep. Jason Morgan all attended the rally and demonstrated genuine support for our cause. Rep. Morgan, who represents part of Ann Arbor, extended an invitation to the Ann Arbor-area delegation to discuss our concerns and demands in his office. The meeting was a great success and upon debriefing, our delegation agreed that it couldn’t have gone any better. “At least we have a real ally in our own district,” said one renter.

After the exhausting day of demonstrating, our delegation boarded our charter bus and we began the stretch back home to Ann Arbor. Reflecting on our rally, a wave of hope came over me. This is the beginning of a powerful tenant movement in our state, a movement that will win better rights and lower rents for tenants across



Justin Yuan from McKinley Tenants Association addresses the crowd. Photo credit: The Rent is Too Damn High Coalition.

Michigan. The Rent is Too Damn High Coalition will continue the fight in Lansing with our support, but it’s up to us to get organized here in Ann Arbor.

Public Toilets in A2 and Ypsi

Please remember to use public toilets where available. The staff at Groundcover News has made this list of public toilets for its readers. If you know of more public toilets, please reach out to our staff at this email address: CONTACT@GROUNDCOVERNEWS.COM. “Thank you” from the staff!



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Ann Arbor, MI 48103
MON - SUN 24/7



Ypsi Transit Center
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SUN 8a - 7:45p



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Ann Arbor, MI 48104
MON - FRI 6a - 12a
SAT 7:15a - 11p
SUN 8a - 7:30p



AADL Downtown
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Ann Arbor, 48104
MON - SUN 10a - 8p

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+ Christ Jesus (John 8:42)

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GEO wins historic contract after five month strike

JOSHUA LEE
Groundcover contributor

On August 25, the University of Michigan and the Graduate Employees’ Organization reached a breakthrough agreement, ending a nearly five-month strike. This pivotal development won substantial pay raises for graduate student instructors and staff assistants, accompanied by a range of additional benefits.

The labor strike, which began in late March, was a dispute that not only disrupted the U-M campus but also led to legal proceedings. Few strikes ever go through the full range of procedures. Representing approximately 2,300 graduate student instructors and staff assistants across U-M’s three campuses, GEO spearheaded this ongoing battle, championing improved compensation and benefits.

Members of GEO deliberated during a mass meeting on August 21 and ultimately authorized their bargaining team to pursue a tentative agreement with the university. The union conducted a ratification vote on August 24 which had 97% approval. This accord

spells the end of a highly charged strike, fostering a return to normalcy for both the U-M undergraduate community and the parties directly involved.

The protracted strike led to a series of disruptions, including professors stepping in to undertake grading tasks typically handled by graduate students. Legally, the university sought a court order compelling striking workers back to their posts, a request that was ultimately denied. Union leaders voiced concerns about the university’s handling of student grades during the strike, prompting an inquiry by the accrediting body, the Higher Learning Commission. Despite these challenges, the union’s persistence and the university’s engagement in negotiations have paved the way for this historic agreement.

The university’s proposal, its “last, best and final offer,” encompasses an eight percent raise in the first year of the contract, complemented by successive six percent raises in the second and third years. Targeting graduate student instructors and staff assistants stationed at U-M’s Ann Arbor campus, this proposition acknowledges the pivotal

role these individuals play in the university’s operations — ranging from grading assignments and exams to leading classes and contributing to diverse university initiatives.

However, this journey through negotiations has not been without its challenges. GEO began its campaign with the fact that the skyrocketing inflation in the past years had put its members salaries 60% below the estimated cost of living for Ann Arbor. This is why the union initially advocated for a substantial 60 percent raise in the first year of the three-year contract. While the agreement does not meet this demand fully, a de facto 60 percent raise will be realized for many graduate workers due to a separate graduate funding plan, aka Rackham Plan, pushed forward by U-M this Spring as a union-breaking strategy. This plan, designed to ensure summer funding for Ph.D. students, is set to remain intact.

The strategic combination of these initiatives, according to GEO spokesperson and doctoral political science candidate, Amir Fleischmann, yields a substantial raise for most Ph.D. students in the contract’s initial year.

Fleischmann further suggests that incoming Ph.D. students could experience a remarkable 80 percent raise by the conclusion of the contract, compared to their earnings in the previous contract cycle.

Beyond the salary, this resolution introduces essential safeguards for graduate student instructors and staff assistants. For example, the settlement includes a transitional funding program aimed at shielding workers from harassment and potential threats. This three-year pilot initiative will provide funding for up to a semester, allowing students to transition out of situations involving abusive or discriminatory relationships with their supervisors or colleagues.

Furthermore, enhancements in mental and physical therapy copays, in conjunction with the expansion of gender-affirming benefits, underscore the university’s commitment to fostering a supportive and inclusive environment for all stakeholders.

In a statement, GEO lead negotiator Evelyn Smith highlighted the historic

see GEO page 11 ➡

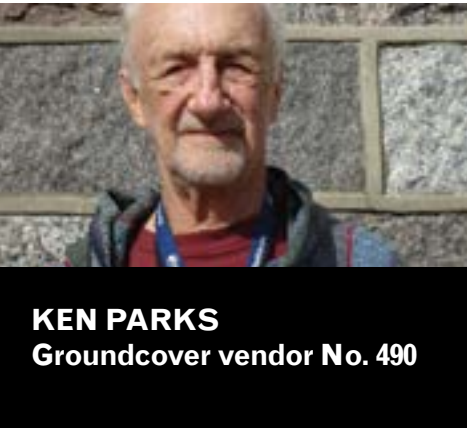
Timeless time

When I learned these two words I began to understand the seamless nature of past, present and future. I learned that the first Karmapa, head of the Karma Kagyu lineage, was called Düsüm Khyenpa, translated as “knower of the three times” by virtue of his enlightenment experience in timeless time. This lineage is now held by the 17th Karmapa.

Obstacles arrive at every stage of the path in life and it’s good to work with whoever is available and helpful for your current situation. This may be a lifetime teacher or one of many.

Your intention to realize the truth of reality is decisive, and cultivating that intention into experience and abilities is the goal. There is always work to be done. Our ancestors point the way and all lineage holders carry that responsibility. Thrangu Rinpoche, who died in 2023, was an amazing teacher and writer. He was an important tutor to Ogyen Trinley Dorje who is a successor to the 16th Karmapa. Timeless time brings the three times into a seamless whole.

I have been accused of being “stuck in the past” and have been told to forget the past. My first response is “detach from the past, honor and learn from the past.” I do not know how much I am



stuck in the past but I certainly do not have a stable realization of timeless time that brings the seamless nature of the three times into clarity, yet I dare to explore this truth as I understand it.

I have mentioned awareness of the breath in many articles and still believe that one natural breath is more precious than all the words that could be written about awareness of this moment. Mindfulness can be a buzzword for compliance with social norms. Mindfulness and awareness have many levels. Gabor Mate has written “The Myth of Normal” to help us in our healing.

Authenticity is precious and elusive because of habitual ego-clinging. Most of us forget who we really are as we

submit to survival demands and forget to thrive, that is to live from the heart. We are surrounded by the bountiful fruit of the earth yet often live with a scarcity mentality. Every indigenous heritage focuses on the sacred nature and generosity of the earth. Gratitude and contentment follow.

It is a common practice in all communities with a heartfelt relationship to reality to call upon our ancestors to help live a balanced and engaged life. “Cesar Chavez presente” was said three times in the many events that celebrated his contribution to our shared life. This exercise that some would say is kin to a seance put many of us in touch with the great commons, the all good expanse of primordial purity.

If you focus on the present as a measurement, you will only find nano moments that disappear the present. Born from the past and immediately giving birth to the future, this moment is best experienced as the essence of the four times — past, present, future and timeless time — which are seamless in the unity of stillness and motion. The unity of opposites is the key to experience the play of reality and enter the game of life with some confidence.

If you are in Santa Clara, Cuba, visit the memorial to Che Guevara and get a

taste of the four times. Remember Fidel’s words that Che did not die, because they met in dreams and talked. The famous photo of Che by Korda is timeless.

In my opinion any experience is worthy as we learn more about who we are, as individuals and as a people. I hope you meditated on “The People are the Power” in the previous edition of Groundcover.

Any event is best understood with awareness of the four times. Take Labor Day as an example. We have yet to fully honor labor and get another chance as the number of strikes grows to a larger section of the working class.

As a thought experiment, consider this year’s Labor Day with “timeless time” in mind. Contrast the long history that goes back to May Day as International Workers Day with the current focus on the Detroit Jazz Festival.

Experience this historical moment deeply and tune in to the power of your labor and a fitting social connection to the emancipation of labor. May we become creatively productive and complete what needs to be done. The future begins now. The International Day of Peace is coming September 21. Meet you on the commons! Check out annarborcommunitycommons.org.

Sudoku

★★★★☆ 4puz.com

	9			3				
	3	6			7			
7				5	9			2
8					1	4		
1				6				8
		4	3					6
3			7	8				1
			1			3	2	
				4			5	

Fill in the squares so that each row, column, and 3-by-3 box contain the numbers 1 through 9.

Groundcover Vendor Code

While Groundcover is a non-profit, and paper vendors are self-employed contractors, we still have expectations of how vendors should conduct themselves while selling and representing the paper.

The following is our **Vendor Code of Conduct**, which every vendor reads and signs before receiving a badge and papers. We request that if you discover a vendor violating any tenets of the Code, please contact us and provide as many details as possible. Our paper and our vendors should be positively impacting our County.

- Groundcover will be distributed for a voluntary donation. I agree not to ask for more than the cover price or solicit donations by any other means.
- When selling Groundcover, I will always have the current biweekly issue of Groundcover available for customer purchase.
- I agree not to sell additional goods or products when selling the paper or to panhandle, including panhandling with only one paper or selling past monthly issues.
- I will wear and display my badge when selling papers and refrain from wearing it or other Groundcover gear when engaged in other activities.
- I will only purchase the paper from Groundcover Staff and will not sell to or buy papers from other

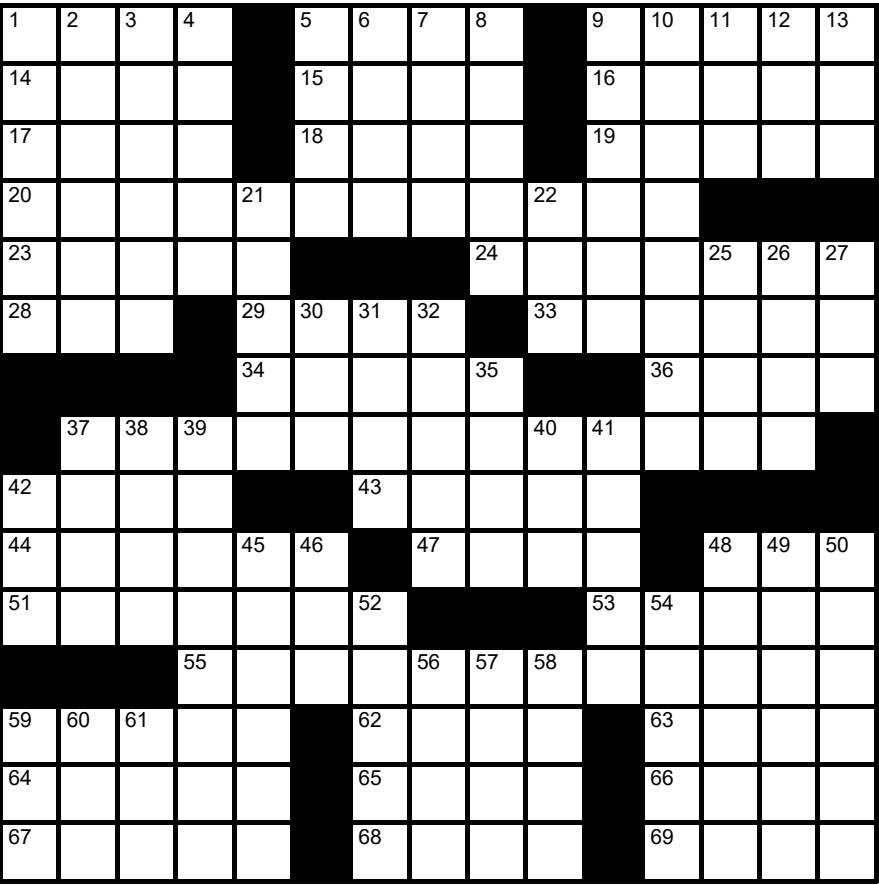
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- I agree to treat all customers, staff, and other vendors respectfully. I will not “hard sell,” threaten, harass or pressure customers, staff, or other vendors verbally or physically.
- I will not sell Groundcover under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- I understand that I am not a legal employee of Groundcover but a contracted worker responsible for my own well-being and income.
- I understand that my badge is property of Groundcover and will not deface it. I will present my badge when purchasing the papers.
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- I agree to stay at least one block away from another vendor in downtown areas. I will also abide by the Vendor Corner Policy.
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If you would like to report a violation of the Vendor Code please email contact@groundcovernews.com or fill out the contact form on our website.

CROSSWORD

from the International Network of Street Papers



- ACROSS

1. Hang loose

5. Pack away

9. Slight trace

14. Opera solo

15. Mysterious (Var.)

16. Pie cuts, essentially

17. Frost-covered

18. Eastern music

19. Be theatrical

20. Carnivorous plant native to the Carolinas

23. Bet's precursor

24. Carrier

28. "Acid"

29. Spanish pot

33. Ancient land on the Aegean

34. Control, symbolically

36. James ___ Jones

37. Tool used to mend socks

42. Get-up-and-go

43. African antelope

44. Ear doctor

47. Blunted blade

48. Appropriate

51. Really bad

53. Arctic diving bird

55. Sharecropper

59. Brace

62. In need of resupply, as shelves

63. Bundle of hay

64. Necklace item

65. 20-20, e.g.

66. Mine entrance

67. Anxious

68. Cleaning cabinet supplies

69. Accuse
- DOWN

1. Like caterpillars

2. Projecting windows

3. Described

4. What many a fast break ends in

5. Bondman

6. Blue hue

7. Bacchanal

8. Comedian Cenac formerly of "The Daily Show"

9. Christmas decoration

10. Hindered

11. Altar avowal

12. Hale

13. "A pox on you!"

21. Cut off

22. "Baloney!"

25. Canaanite deity

26. Farm measure

27. Come together

30. Floral necklace

31. Ancestry

32. Viewpoint

35. Become unhinged

37. Clobber

38. Breezy

39. Revels

40. SWW's opposite

41. Swelling

42. Bleat

45. Stinky

46. "The Joy Luck Club" author Amy

48. Fighting force

49. Early round

50. Slightly tapering

52. Categorize

54. Kind of sprawl or renewal

56. Blue shade

57. Family ___

58. Sloughs

59. Health resort

60. Big ___ Conference

61. "Dig in!"

When Robert Frost came to Michigan: a view of power and poetry in a democracy

According to Poets.org, Robert Frost's life can be summarized as follows. Frost was born on March 26, 1874, in San Francisco, where his father and mother had moved from Pennsylvania shortly after marrying. After the death of his father when Frost was eleven, he moved with his mother and sister to Lawrence, Mass. He became interested in reading and writing poetry during his high school years in Lawrence, enrolled at Dartmouth College in 1892 and, later, at Harvard University, though he never earned a formal degree. Frost drifted through a string of occupations after leaving school, working as a teacher, a cobbler and editor of the Lawrence Sentinel. His first published poem, "My Butterfly," appeared on November 8, 1894 in the New York newspaper, "The Independent."

Frost married his high school sweetheart, Elinor Miriam White, in 1895. It was said Elinor, who died in 1938, was a major inspiration for his poetry. Four years after her death, Frost proclaimed that he had "A lover's quarrel with the world."

Frost said he went to England to write a novel and, perhaps, dramatic plays. There he was influenced by renowned European poets such as Edward Thomas, Rupert Brooke, Robert Graves, John Keats, William Butler Yeats and Thomas Hardy, and Georgian Poets T.E. Hulme and Lascelles Abercrombie.

In 1917, Frost signed a three-year teaching contract with Amherst College. He continued to be a prolific writer of poems. Many historians, including Poets.org, noted that by 1920, Frost was the most celebrated poet in America. He got more famous with every new publication of his books. Frost won a total of four Pulitzer Prizes for poetry, the only poet to do so. He served as a consultant in poetry to the Library of Congress 1957-1959. In 1960, Frost won the Congressional Gold Medal, signed by President Eisenhower, and presented by John F. Kennedy in 1962. Frost read his poem "The Gift Outright" at JFK's inauguration ceremony on January 20, 1961.

After receiving an honorary Master's Degree in Arts and Letters from the University of Michigan in 1921, Frost came back to receive an honorary doctorate in Law from U-M in 1962. Although Frost got honorary degrees from Dartmouth, Harvard and other prestigious schools, he told friends that he valued and cherished the honorary degrees from Michigan, the campus he loved very much.



WILL SHAKESPEARE
Groundcover vendor No. 258

Frost died in Boston in January 1963, a few months after his Spring 1962 commencement speech and poetry reading to an overflowing, joyous crowd at the Michigan Football Stadium.

Frost Gets a Teaching Fellowship at U-M

Robert Frost arrived at U-M in 1921, stayed until 1923, and then returned for a second fellowship 1925 to 1926. He was invited by U-M's popular President, Rev./Dr. Marion Leroy Burton. Frost and Burton shared a vision about how poetry and the arts could transform the lives, thinking and reflections of young people across the nation.

President Burton secured a \$5,000 donation in 1921 to bring Frost to U-M. In his application for the grant, Burton said, "A real University should be a patron of arts, literature and creative activity. We ought to have on campus [creative artists] who are actually producing the results which influence the thought of a nation."

The above quote, by writer and scholar Paul Diamond, was in the article, "Frost and Burton at Michigan: 1921-1926," published in "The Michigan Quarterly Review" of July 14, 2023. In his acceptance letter, Frost thanked President Burton for his vision of "keeping the creative and the erudite together in education where they belong; and [where the creative can also] make its demand on young students."

Diamond noted that Frost made a big impact at Michigan. "He had led the monthly meetings at Professor Cowden's home on Olivia Avenue for student writers of the literary magazine, Whimsies. Frost shared his poems, and the students shared theirs ... and then Frost would encourage them to keep their poems around for a while and 'deepen, deepen it.'"

There was no doubt that having America's most famous poet helping Michigan students to excel was very positive, but some professors in the



Robert Frost reciting a poem at John F. Kennedy's inauguration.

English Department displayed hostile attitudes toward Frost due to his lacking formal academic degrees. Some of them described Frost as a college dropout who made as much money as full professors.

Sadly, the student writers who appreciated Frost knew about the envy and resentment. They devoted the last issue of their 1923 publication to Frost as a token of gratitude. President Burton also felt triumphant and grateful. He wanted to make Frost's residency permanent with \$6,000 annually from the University fund. Frost agreed in principle but then Burton died suddenly of a heart attack. After Frost gave an emotional eulogy for his number one advocate, Frost decided to do just a final residency from 1925 to 1926.

He continued his impressive work with student writers, who changed their magazine's name to Outlanders. He lived with his family in a house on Pontiac Trail. The house has since been moved by the Ford Museum to Greenfield Village.

Frost wrote dozens of poems at Michigan. His residency produced some of the most memorable of his poems, cited by laypeople and the powerful. They include, "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening," "Spring Pools" and "Fire and Ice."

His poetry collection titled "New Hampshire" was published in 1924. It was dedicated to the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, and it won the 1924 Pulitzer Prize for excellence in poetry.

During one of his frequent dinners at President Burton's house, Burton claimed that Frost might even be more popular than the football coach, Fielding Yost, because of his civic engagement and national celebrity status. Frost's response, according to

Diamond, was a humorous challenge: "Let's put that to the test: schedule a reading for me at the same time as a home football game. More than 30,000 will be cheering at the Perry Field. The Hill Auditorium will be empty, since even I will be at the game."

The Intersection of Power and Poetry in a Democracy

Robert Frost described himself as a "humanist." Some critics called him a poet inspired by rural rusticity, landscapes, forests and pastoral disposition. He also wrote about the social and political challenges of his time, including wars, women's rights and the crushing poverty of the Great Depression.

Frost wanted his students and readers to do deep thinking. He was inclined to write in parables.

Many people in positions of power loved his poetry collections. President John F. Kennedy invited him to read his poem in January 1961 at the Presidential Inauguration. He recited the poem "The Gift Outright," very dear to folks from New England.

After the poet passed away, Amherst College invited President Kennedy to give a speech at a ceremony to dedicate the Robert Frost Memorial Library. His speech was about the link between poetry and power. As quoted in HuffPost Entertainment of July 14, 2023, Kennedy said, "When power leads man to arrogance, poetry reminds him of his limitations. When power narrows the areas of men's concern, poetry reminds him of the richness and diversity of this existence. When power corrupts, poetry cleanses. For art establishes the basic human

see **FROST** next page ➡

➡ FROST from last page

truth which must serve as the touchstone of our judgment."

Talking specifically about Frost in his 1963 remarks at Amherst, President Kennedy said, "Our national strength matters, but the spirit which informs and controls our strength matters just as much. This was the special significance of Frost. He brought an unsparing instinct for reality to bear on the platitudes and pieties of society. His sense of the human tragedy fortified him against self-deception and easy consolation."

"I have been," he wrote, "one acquainted with the night." And because he knew the midnight as well as the high noon, because he understood the ordeal as well as the triumph of the human spirit, he gave his age strength with which to overcome despair. At the bottom, he held a deep faith in the spirit of man and it is hardly an accident that Frost coupled poetry and power, for he saw poetry as the means of saving power from itself."

We believe JFK is right in his assessment of Frost and artists in general. After his assassination the next month — November 1963 — JFK's personal secretary found in the Oval Office some books of poetry by Frost as well as "Ulysses" by Alfred Lord Tennyson. Both "Ulysses" and many of Frost's poems, but especially "Spring Pools," written while he was at U-M, are about the need for thoughtful and slow deliberation and not rushing into important decisions. It is safe to say that JFK learned from reading Frost and embraced these values.

➡ GEO from page 8

significance of the agreement, noting that the achievements attained were a result of collective determination rather than unilateral generosity. The union's long-haul strike was the driving force behind these successes.

According to U-M spokesperson Rick Fitzgerald, the agreement holds significant implications. It provides the university with the assurance that the fall term will proceed without disruptions, reaffirming the institution's dedication to its core educational mission. It's worth noting that the deal offers more favorable terms to U-M graduate students in Ann Arbor compared to those in Dearborn and Flint, despite the union's consistent proposals for pay parity across campuses. While U-M-Dearborn graduate student workers will receive annual raises of 3.5 percent throughout the contract's three-year term, efforts are underway to align the minimum stipend on the Flint campus with the Dearborn standard.

Additionally, graduate students across all three campuses are set to receive a \$1,000 bonus. GEO's treasurer, Prayag Chata, has started a solidarity fund to redistribute the bonus to members who lost their paycheck in April during the strike and to those who will not enjoy the full benefits of

STOPPING BY THE WOODS ON A SNOWY EVENING

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

SPRING POOLS

These pools that, though in forests, still reflect
The total sky almost without defect,
And like the flowers beside them, chill and shiver,
Will like the flowers beside them soon be gone,
And yet not out by any brook or river,
But up by roots to bring dark foliage on.
The trees that have it in their pent-up buds
To darken nature and be summer woods —
Let them think twice before they use their powers
To blot out and drink up and sweep away
These flowery waters and these watery flowers
From snow that melted only yesterday.

*poetry by Robert Frost
written during his time
at U-M*

the new contract. Many members have pledged to donate their bonus, and anyone can make a contribution on givebutter.com/GEOStrikeFund.

"We fought tooth-and-nail over ten months of bargaining and five months of strike action, forcing U-M to grant the largest salary increase in GEO history," the union wrote early Friday on X, the social media platform formerly known as Twitter.

The University of Michigan and its graduate student workers have voted to restore equilibrium to their academic ecosystem. The impending resolution serves as a testament to the power of negotiations, advocacy and collective action in driving

transformative change. The settlement underscores the pivotal role that graduate student workers play in the functioning of higher education institutions. As the curtain falls on this chapter of the University of Michigan's history, the reverberations of these negotiations within the university community and the broader academic realm are inescapable. The lessons learned from this strike will undoubtedly shape future dialogues surrounding equitable compensation, conducive working conditions, and the unifying spirit that propels progress toward shared goals.

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Summer corn saute

ELIZABETH BAUMAN
Groundcover contributor

Ingredients:

4 tablespoons butter
4 ears sweet corn, kernels sliced from cobs (4 cups kernels)
3 green onions, chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
Salt and pepper
8 medium-sized basil leaves, chopped

Directions:

Add butter to a large skillet over medium-high heat. Once melted, add sweet corn kernels, green onions, and garlic then season with lots of salt and pepper and saute until kernels are crisp-tender, 4-5 minutes. Add chopped basil then stir to combine and serve.

GROUNDCOVER NEWS VOLUNTEER MEETING!

Interested in writing, proofreading or helping out at the office?
Have an idea or project that you want to get working on?

All our welcome to join!

Friday, September 15th, 4:00 p.m.
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PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

5	9	1	8	3	2	7	6	4
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